

Panel Disputes Report on Soviet Radar

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An organization of leading American scientists took issue yesterday with a Reagan administration report that maintained that the Soviet Union was probably violating various U.S.-Soviet arms-control treaties.

A study of such agreements by the Federation of American Scientists maintained that the "most plausible function" of a giant radar facility that the Soviet Union has been building in central Siberia since early 1983 is for use in guiding Soviet antisatellite weapons of the future to their targets in space.

In January, the administration said the phased-array radar being constructed at Abalakova "almost certainly constitutes a violation" of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and made it the centerpiece of a report

to Congress which described seven claimed or probable violations of prior agreements.

"There is much less than meets the eye in the administration's charges," the Washington-based organization of 5,000 scientists concluded, criticizing the finding that the allegations raise doubts "about the reliability of the U.S.S.R. as a negotiating partner."

The organization has often criticized the administration's approach to arms control. The study does, however, list "troubling issues" in Soviet activities both with the radar and with testing of new intercontinental ballistic missiles. It recommends "pursuing these issues in serious, private negotiations."

Its report on Abalakova illustrates the problems in verification under the past agreements.

The ABM treaty requires that such a large radar located away from a

country's border be limited to "tracking objects in outer space."

The report also notes that Abalakova could act as an ABM battle management radar, which would be a treaty violation, by guiding interceptors to incoming missile warheads. It points out that five fields of intercontinental ballistic missiles are near the radar facility.

However, it says the radar, facing east, does not cover warheads that could come in from the Indian Ocean to the south or over the North Pole from the United States. Thus, it concludes, the facility "does not appear to be optimized for the ABM battle management function."

The study argues that Abalakova more logically fits into an antisatellite interception system, guiding Soviet satellite killers to their targets when both are traveling over Soviet territory.

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